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Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
2026 PROJECT MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

Driving Business Success through Project Managers by Evolving our Processes, Tools, and Ourselves

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Conflicts of Interest



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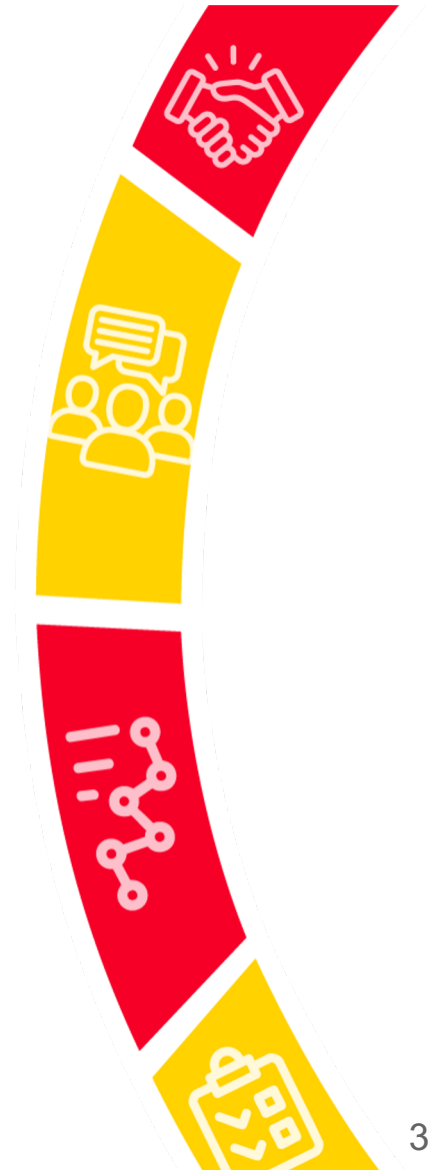


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Introductions

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Learning Objectives



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Following this presentation, you will be able to:

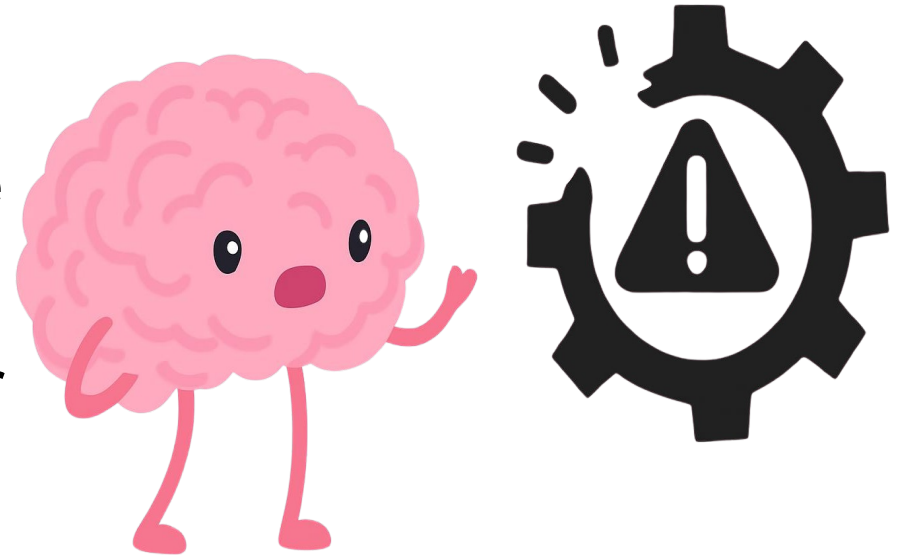
- Give examples of how to build a strong project management community of practice
- Describe how to establish collaboration across departments for process improvement
- Design a repeatable system for platforming project management expertise



The Challenge



- PMOs play a critical role in connecting organizational strategy to project outcomes.
- Many struggle with knowledge silos, limited professional development, and stakeholder disengagement.



The Challenge Cont.



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Fragmented, duplicative processes emerge when project teams can't learn from one another.

PMs may be unaware of how shifts in other departments affect their work. Isolation stifles innovation.

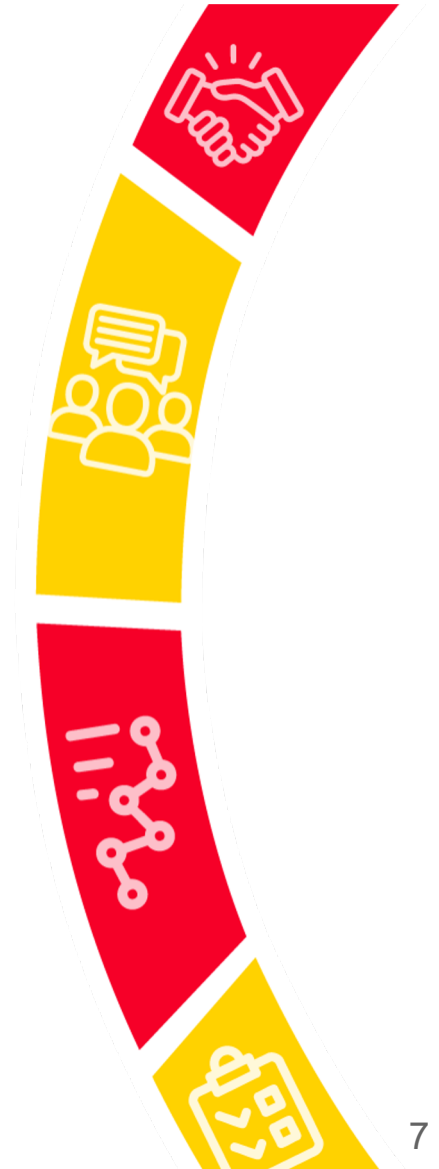
Without a structured system for skill building and community, PMOs miss meaningful opportunities to improve both employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.



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Case Study

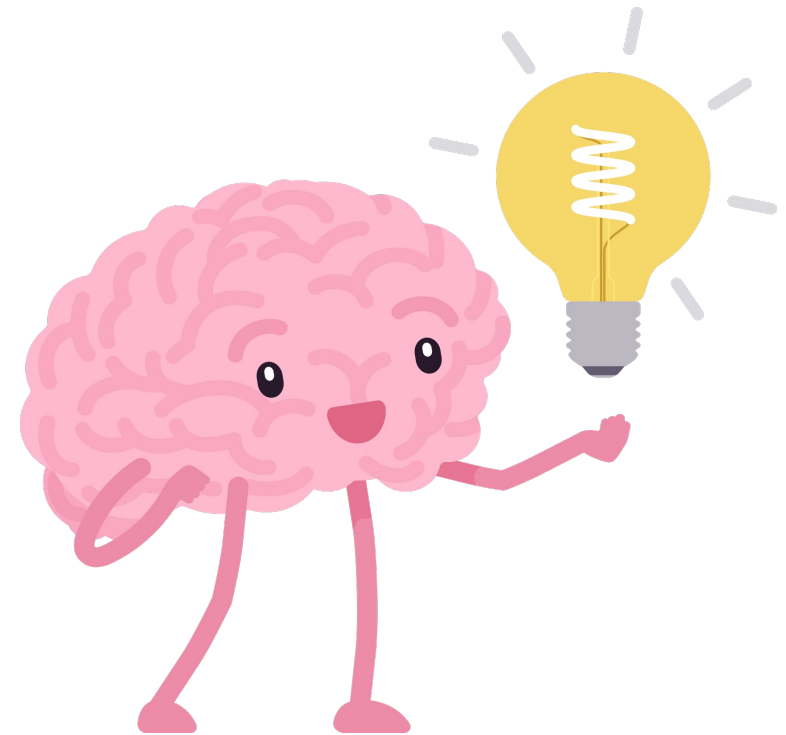


Case Study: Project Management Power Hour



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- To address these challenges, JBS International's PMO launched the PM Power Hour.
- Goals:
 - Enhance project manager knowledge surrounding the use of new and existing tools, resources, and practices.
 - Develop a sense of community and collaboration across projects and functional areas, including IT, HR, Finance, etc.



Format & Structure



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- Flexible format tailored to topic and attendee needs:
 - Full one-hour tool demonstrations, or
 - 20–30 minute presentation followed by breakout sessions to apply knowledge and connect with peers
- Polls and surveys included in every session to drive engagement and assess understanding
- Project success stories and highlights featured for select topics
- Sessions auto-recorded and available asynchronously
- Attendance mandatory for all project management staff — live or via recording
- Sessions qualify for PMI Professional Development Units



Curating the Topics



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How Topics Are Identified

- PMO staff conducted a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to understand organizational needs
- Project managers were interviewed directly to surface pain points and priorities
- The Risks, Opportunities, and Issues (ROI) register was reviewed to identify where training could mitigate risks or prevent recurring issues

This process generated an initial topic backlog for the PM Power Hour



Curating the Topics Cont.



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How Topics Stay Current

- During ongoing planning sessions, PMO staff conduct backlog grooming
- The SWOT, ROI register, and interview feedback are continuously referenced
- Topic prioritization remains responsive to the evolving needs of project managers and stakeholders
- Topics are selected based on organizational changes and initiatives, one of the ways the PMO supports organizational change management at JBS

Stakeholder Engagement



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- Pre-launch stakeholder analysis revealed a broad audience beyond just project managers
- Functional area staff (e.g. Finance, HR, IT, Contracts) were identified as key stakeholders and co-contributors
- Depending on topic relevance, employees from other teams are invited to attend and participate



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Stakeholder Engagement

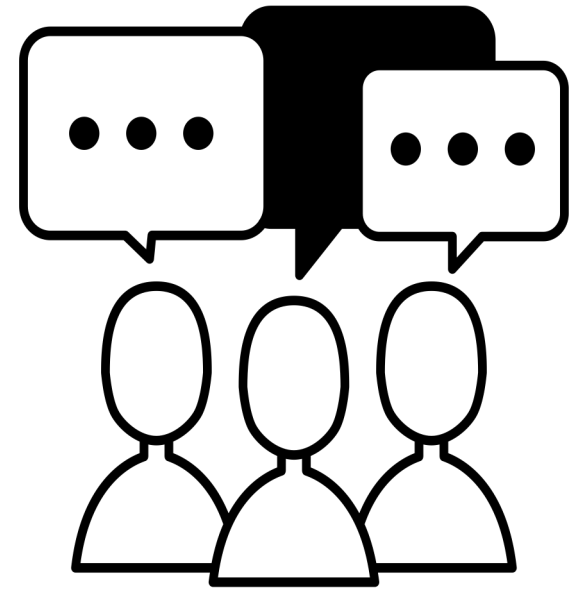


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Cross-Functional Co-Presenters in Action

Cost-To-Complete Template session: A Contracts office leader co-presented to explain how contract type informs Cost-To-Complete inputs, connecting PM tools directly to contract requirements

AI Tools session: Two Communications staff members presented a framework for selecting the best AI tool, expanding attendees' awareness of other projects and reducing silos



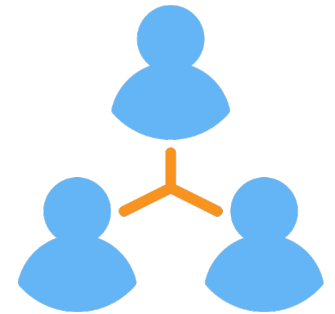
Building a Community of Practice



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Inter-Project Relationships as a Goal

- Breakout rooms are designed to help PMs meet colleagues, learn about other projects, and share approaches to shared challenges
- At the close of every session, attendees are surveyed on two questions:
 - Did your skills increase?
 - Did you make a new connection with another project manager?
- These questions reinforce that community and capability are equally valued outcomes of every PM Power Hour



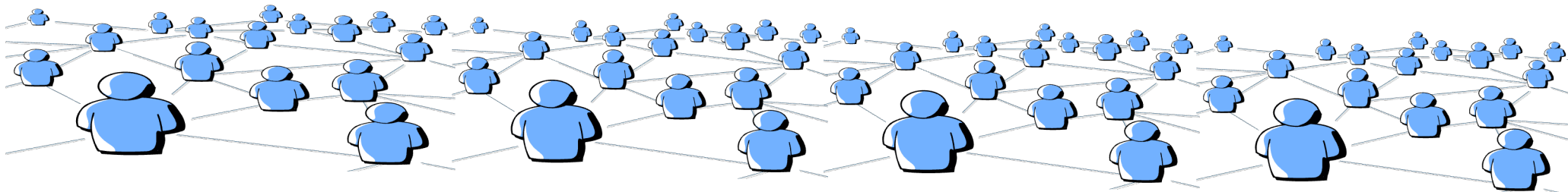
Building a Community of Practice



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Platforming Project Managers at Every Level

- PMs of all levels and career stages are invited to present a success story, tool, or lesson learned from their projects
- The PMO intentionally platforms high-performing project managers regardless of tenure, encouraging innovation and recognizing contributions across the organization

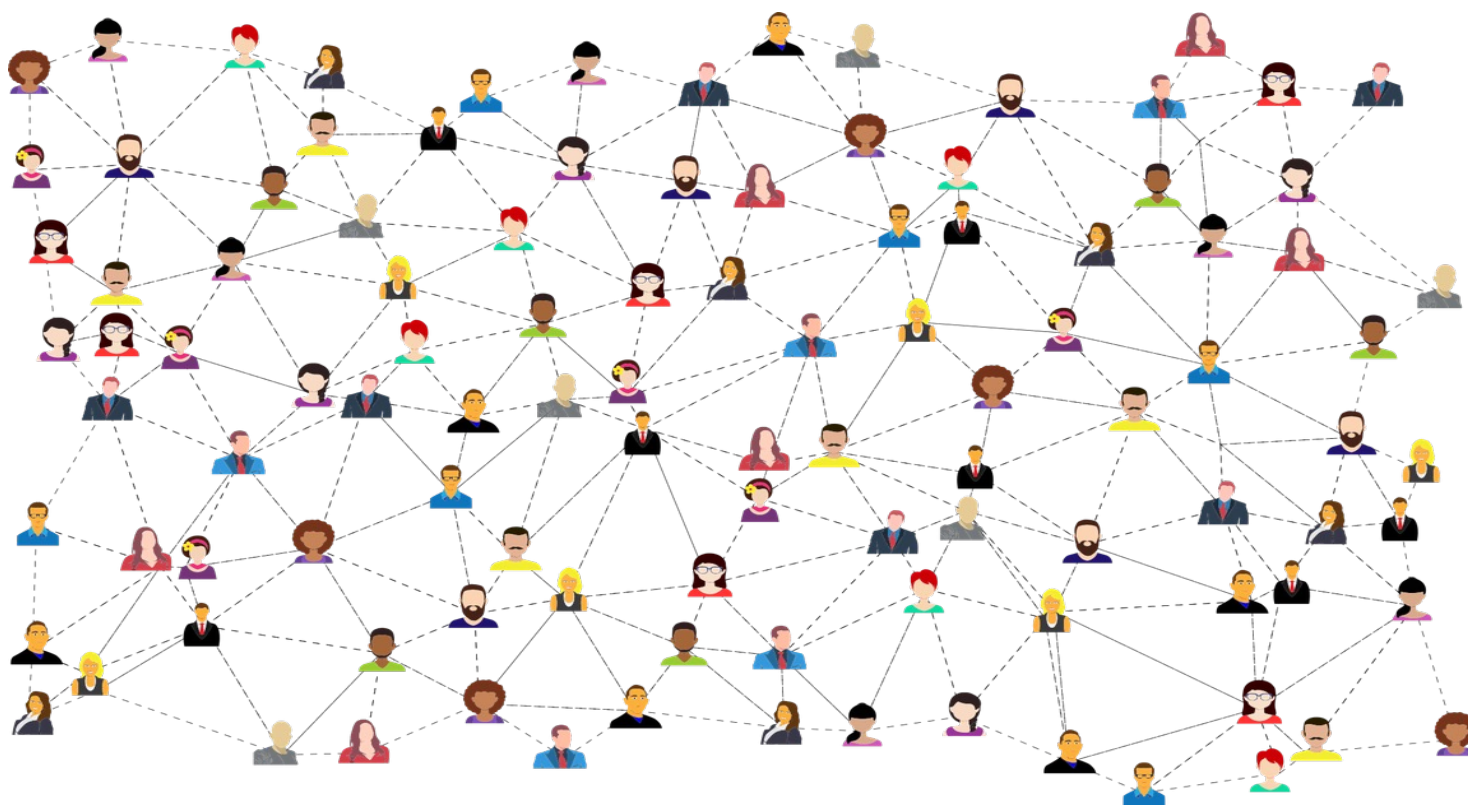




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The Results



Community Building By the Numbers

- 9 PM Power Hours held between May 2024 and February 2026
- 213 non-unique attendees responded to session polls
- 74% somewhat agreed or agreed that the PM Power Hour "helped me develop connections with other project managers"



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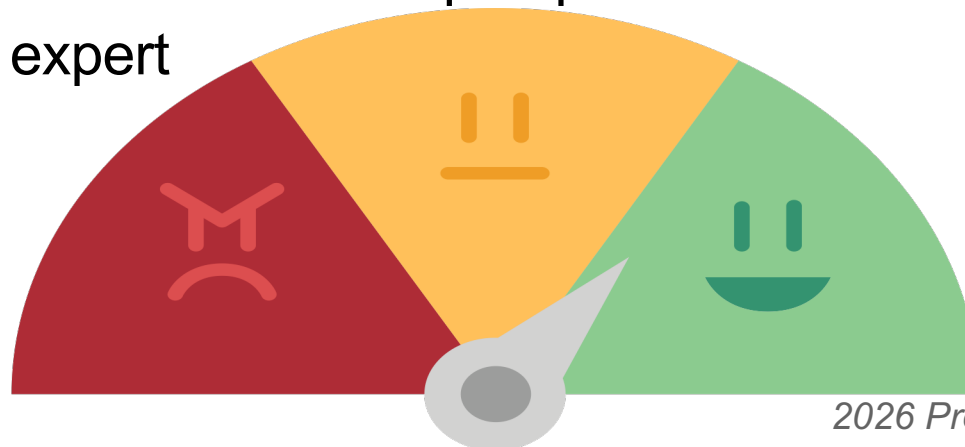


Stakeholder Engagement By the Numbers



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- PM Power Hour on project launch processes featured a guest speaker from the Contracts office
- 100% of poll respondents agreed they understood the importance of knowing their contract type after the session
- Outcome: PMs gained insight into what successful project launch looks like from the Contracts office perspective — a direct result of including a functional expert



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The Ripple Effect: A Template for Internal Professional Development



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A sign of success: other departments are adopting the PM Power Hour model

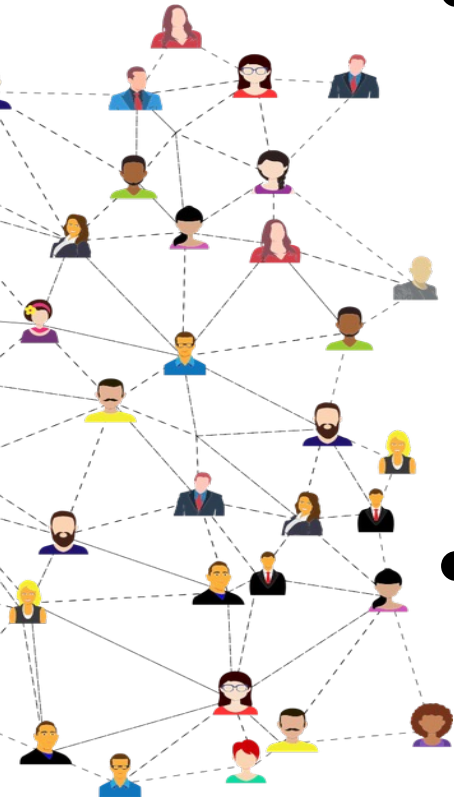
- Following an enterprise-wide reorganization, the PM Power Hour served as a ready-made template for newly formed departments seeking a structured space for team-wide learning.



Why It Works



- When stakeholders outside the PMO are actively engaged in learning, communities of practice emerge that create a sense of belonging and enable employees to learn from each other, leading to increased innovation and productivity
- Cross-functional collaboration strengthens knowledge management practices and supports progress toward the organization's strategic goals



Servant Leadership as the Foundation



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- A servant leader builds competencies, removes hindrances, encourages innovation, and empowers creative problem-solving
- Servant leadership also prioritizes strong stakeholder relationships which are the connective tissue of a collaborative culture
- This leadership approach is what makes the continuous improvement cycle sustainable



Value-Creation: What the PM Power Hour Delivers to the Organization



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- Aligning to Organizational Strategy
- Building a Culture of Accountability
- The PM Power Hour as a Change Management Channel
- Using Data to Improve Every Session



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Aligning to Organizational Strategy



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- PMI's PMO Value Ring™ Framework places alignment between projects and organizational objectives at its core
- The PM Power Hour directly supports the "service operation" function of the Value Ring™ by investing in team development and fostering a learning culture
- Connecting PM Power Hour learning objectives to strategic goals helps project managers understand how their project work advances the organization's mission

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Building a Culture of Accountability

- The PM Power Hour pairs clear expectations with comprehensive support, creating both the standard and the means to meet it
- Supervisors can establish a consistent baseline of skill and process adherence across all project managers, reinforced through quarterly performance assessments
- Community of practice fosters social accountability and a collaborative environment where team members hold each other responsible for shared goals

Result: the PMO builds organizational value by developing both competency and community simultaneously



Advancing PMO Maturity



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How the Power Hour drove PMO growth:

- Mandatory attendance created a consistent, organization-wide baseline of skills and process adherence
- Recurring structure provided the PMO with a reliable channel to set standards, manage change, and reinforce expectations
- Community of practice created social accountability where peers hold each other to shared professional standards

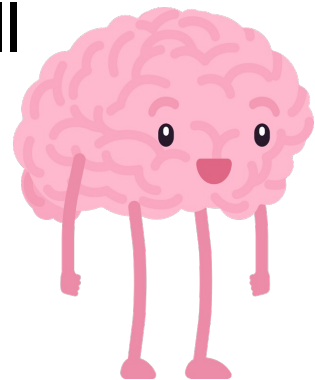


PM Power Hour as a Change Management Channel



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- The recurring structure creates a reliable touchpoint for managing organizational change
- Real example: when a new enterprise-wide PMIS migration was announced, an attendee praised the PMO for "communicating this upcoming change well in advance and providing context and a plan for the transition"

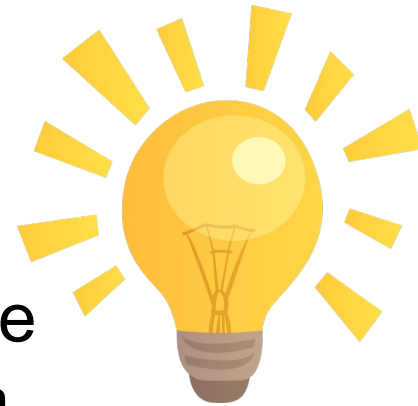


PM Power Hour as a Change Management Channel



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- This model aligns directly with the Prosci 3-Phase Change Management Process:
 - Phase 1 — Prepare Approach
 - Phase 2 — Manage Change
 - Phase 3 — Sustain Outcomes
- Each phase can be addressed across successive PM Power Hour sessions — making the model a natural vehicle for structured, organization-wide change



Using Data to Improve Every Session



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- Poll results are reviewed after each session to inform adjustments to topics, format, and delivery
- Key finding: sessions without breakout rooms, active project case studies, or facilitation by different project managers received consistently lower engagement scores
- PMO responded by intentionally incorporating more of these elements to strengthen community-building opportunities





Key Takeaways — Driving Business Success Through Project Managers

1. Ask Project Managers What They Need and What They Can Offer
2. Engage Stakeholders Across the Organization
3. Build Systems That Inspire Trust Through Reliability
4. Foster Continuous Innovation Through Knowledge Management
5. Use Community to Drive Organizational Value



Turn & Talk: Designing Your PMO Learning Moment

Turn to a neighbor or type a response in chat.

Choose one prompt to discuss for sixty seconds:

1. Partners: What internal department would you put in front of PMs to improve alignment or outcomes?
2. Learning: What topic would be most valuable for all PMs in your organization to be trained in?





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Questions & Evaluation

Evaluate Session:



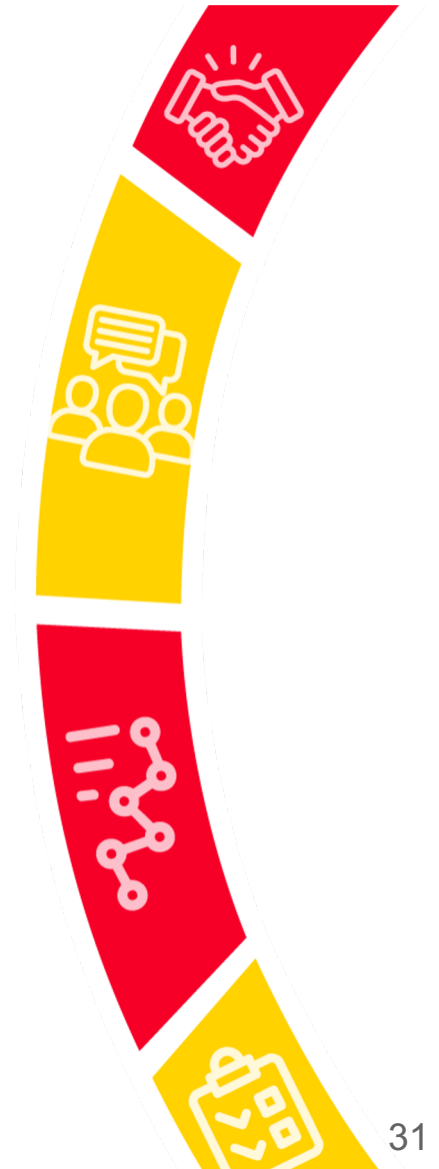
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